



Community News For Immediate Release

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City Replaces Damaged Trees



Employees of the city's cemetery department replacing trees on Broad Street.

In 2004, the city of Selma sustained significant loss of its urban tree canopy throughout the city as a result of the high winds from Hurricane Ivan. While this is just a far memory to most in Selma, the effects of the loss and damage to our historic trees will continue to be felt for decades to come. The effect of extremely high winds not only caused the immediate loss of older trees, but tears and breaks which will result in increased tree loss over the years following the storm. "Some of these trees are now showing severe signs of stress from extreme winds that caused root loss, which leads to decline. The struggle for tree life has been further challenged by two severe seasons of heat and drought that followed Hurricane Ivan", stated Selma's Urban Forester, Jack Rowe.

Selma, like many older mid-sized cities, gained a great deal of benefit from its cover of mature trees. Mostly planted decades to perhaps as much as a century prior to Hurricane Ivan, these trees are over-mature and beginning to age out. Cities often unknowingly depend on their urban trees to soak up excess rainfall that can over-burden public sewers. Trees also provide moderation of winds and sunlight that keep utility bills lower for residents and businesses, as well as generate a more beautiful and happy urban life.

In view of the beneficial function of urban trees, the Federal Government supplied grant funds to allow cities to restore lost public trees. "This year, Selma will complete using the funds provided to plant trees along streets that have lost their tree cover, have suffered losses from utility pruning, or disease from past wind damage", stated Charlotte Griffeth, Director of Planning & Development. The current tree planting emphasis is along Broad Street from First Avenue to Highland Avenue and throughout the major cemeteries. Selma's cemetery department employees are currently planting Pistacia, American Hornbeams, and Serviceberry trees. The tree selection made by members of the Selma's Tree Commission with assistance from Jack Rowe, will add significant tree canopies to one of Selma's main gateways. The city of Selma has gone through numerous training and educational seminars to better understand and protect the valuable tree assets found within Selma. Patty Sexton, Tree Project Manager, Office of Planning and Development, Public Works, and the Cemetery departments coordinate efforts to properly manage the stock of the city's trees. "The City will continue to work to maintain our urban forest, as well as support the efforts of the Selma Tree Commission, Urban Forester and individual citizens who continuously work to keep Selma green and beautiful" stated Mayor James Perkins, Jr.

Through a subsequent grant awarded to the City, Arbor Pro, a professional arboricultural company, provided the City with a tree inventory report. Jack Rowe will continue working with the Selma Tree Commission to update the existing inventory by tagging and identifying trees needing immediate attention. "Selma is proceeding with plans to actively monitor and manage its urban forest in order to reap the benefits of urban trees in the city of Selma today and in the future" stated Carol Henry, President, Selma Tree Commission.

"We make an immense mistake when we think of trees as solely an aesthetic member of a community. They cut pollution, they cool the air, they prevent erosion, they muffle sound, and they produce oxygen. Then, after all that, they look good." - Dr. Richard Leakey

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